

GENERAL POINTS PERTAINING TO SUPPLY
AND TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS CONSIDERED
BY THE TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

"It was learned that in some instances it is cheaper to ship household goods by air than by other means, especially over the shorter distances. We seem to be approaching a point in history where international air freight on a large scale is becoming a reality. This is especially true in shipping to and within Central and South America and the traveler should not overlook air freight as a means of shipping his household goods. The Committee was surprised to learn that a refrigerator could be sent by air from Washington to Habana, Cuba, for approximately the same amount they could send it to Richmond, Va., by other means. One committee member commented 'It looks as if our people will go by ship and our household goods will be flying.'

"One group of measures considered by the Travel and Transportation Committees related to the procurement, packing, and shipping of various items required at Foreign Service posts, with a view to revising policies, procedures, and methods in the interest of efficiency and economy.

"It was suggested that General Services Supply Centers other than New York be utilized in order to save shipping costs, but it was found that other such centers do not at present stock more than one-third of the items generally required, and are not equipped for retail packing and shipment for overseas use.

"Consideration was given to a proposal that Foreign Service Posts be required to utilize 'third country' sources for procurement of items obtainable for nearby countries if prices are advantageous. The Division of Central Services has undertaken to develop a program of exploring potential sources of supply for selected items (paper, for example), and the results of this program will serve as a basis for considering the feasibility of extending 'third country procurement' to other items. In the meantime, administrative officers are urged to utilize 'third country' sources upon their own initiative for any needed items available at costs less than those obtained locally or by requisition from the States.

"Similarly, the Regional Bureaus were requested to instruct posts in their respective jurisdictions to take full advantage of local markets to procure any needed items obtainable at advantageous prices. The Foreign Service Manual is being amended to remove the present optional use of favorable local markets, thus making mandatory the use of such markets when more economical.

"The Committee considered the problem caused by critical shortages and excessive costs of packing materials at some posts, which hamper personnel movements and increase expenses. However, vacillating prices, lack of storage facilities, and decentralized control of funds make impractical the stockpiling of packing materials on a regional basis. A policy statement will be issued soon, however, calling for anticipation of needs, reuse of crates and vans, and stockpiling of packing material where practical.

"Attention was given to the question of whether savings might be effected by shipping automobiles without expensive crating. It was found that automobiles shipped from the United States are crated only if deemed necessary by the U. S. Dispatch Agent, upon the basis of danger of pilferage, stops enroute, handling facilities at destination, etc., which depend upon circumstances in individual cases.

"It was found that the present policy with respect to crating automobiles shipped from the United States is satisfactory but that no instruction or policy guidance has been issued to govern shipments originating abroad. The Committee drafted a policy statement for field guidance which will be issued in the near future."